

ECHOES of *Glen Echo Park*

A Publication of the
Glen Echo Park Foundation
301-320-2330

Vol. 10, No 1
April 1999

Sunday, May 23 - Come to Art in Action at Glen Echo Park

Art in Action

On Sunday, May 23, the Foundation in cooperation with the NPS is sponsoring its second annual Art in Action at Glen Echo Park. From 1:00 pm till 5:00 pm, artists, theater performers, puppeteers, environmentalists, modern dance instructors, and social dance instructors will offer a taste of the classes they hold throughout the year at the park.

Free demonstrations and mini-classes will be set up all around the park. Guitarists and other musicians will entertain as well as demonstrate their teaching techniques. Dance instructors will offer short courses in ballroom dancing and contra dancing. Glass artists will demonstrate stained glass, jewelry making, glass blowing, and other techniques. Pot-



Kathy Darby demonstrates the pottery wheel to young artists

ters will teach beginning wheel techniques. There will be demonstrations in improvisational dance, sculpture, metalworking, quilting, the natural environment (including animals with scales and tails), local healing plants, and puppetry as well as mini-classes in drawing, painting, cartooning,

feather quill pen making, and other arts. Several of the artists will be holding open house. Come and enjoy a picnic at the park picnic tables and an afternoon of art and dance for the whole family.

Foundation Annual Meeting

After the activities, you are invited to stay for the annual Foundation meeting at 5:15 pm, at which the board will present its financial statement and give an update on the status of the park planning process. Foundation members will also elect the board of directors for the coming year.

Dance

Afterwards, please stay for a lively evening of contra dancing, starting at 7:30 pm in the Spanish Ballroom (\$8 admission).

\$18 Million Proposed for Glen Echo Park



Senator Sarbanes announces funding

On January 30, Senator Sarbanes announced at Glen Echo Park that funds to restore the park will be included in the President's FY 2000 budget. Now all three levels of government – County, State, and Fed-

eral – have included funds for the park's restoration in their proposed budgets.

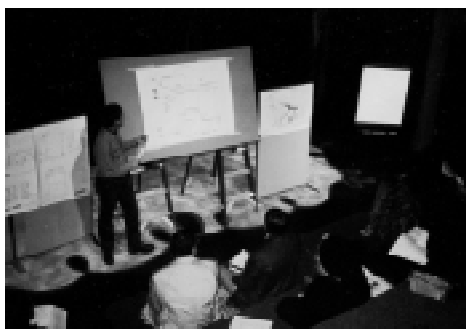
The proposed budgets are being considered by the legislative bodies for each level. The Maryland State legislature has already approved the funding. The Montgomery County Council will vote on its budget by the end of April. Congress is beginning to consider the funding and will vote later in the spring or summer. In addition to Senator Sarbanes, Congresswoman Connie Morella has been crucial in building support in Congress, as has Senator Mikulski.

Thanks go to all of you who have helped us get this far. If we continue

to show our support for the park, we will increase our chances of getting the funding to complete the greatly needed renovations.

The future management of the park is an area that is still unresolved. The Park Service must first prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine the effects of any changes to the management and operation of the park, a process that will take 14 months. Since the plan that the Foundation and the County endorse calls for a continuation of the existing programs with professional management and adequate funding, we are optimistic that the results of the study will be positive.

Renovations of Park Buildings Planned



Tim Buehner explains the renovation plan

On March 15, Superintendent Audrey Calhoun of the National Park Service announced preliminary time lines for the rehabilitation of structures in Glen Echo Park. The Park Service hopes to keep programs functioning during the rehabilitation by moving them into alternative facilities temporarily. Tim Buehner, the NPS historic architect, emphasized that it is important to keep programs running as fully as possible during construction so that park use remains at high levels.

Buehner explained that the work will occur in five stages: planning,

designing, bidding or task orders, construction, and moving cooperators back into the facilities. Design work will begin on July 1, 1999.

During the work, programs will be relocated into trailers, the Arcade, the Bumper Car Pavilion, the Cuddle Up, and the maintenance shed. The Puppet Co. will ultimately move to the North Arcade, which will be completely rebuilt.

Work on the Spanish Ballroom will restore much of the early nineteenth century character of the famous dance hall, once used only in summer. Exterior work will be done first without disruption to program. Interior work will begin in the spring of 2000 and last about seven months. Dancing will move to the Bumper Car Pavilion, which will by then have a new roof and electricity. The pavilion will accommodate about 425 dancers. Imaginative members of the audience suggested that perhaps swing dances will spill over into the Cuddle Up or onto rented platforms.

GEP Foundation

Glen Echo Park
7300 MacArthur Boulevard
Glen Echo, MD 20812
(301) 320-2330

Officers

Chair	Peter Dean
Vice chair	Peter Somerville
Treasurer	Carole Frederick
Secretary	Leonard Koenick

Board Members

Nancy Abeles	Kathleen Darby
Woody Hinkle	Irene Hurley
Carol Hurwitch	Thomas Kettler
Deborah Lange	Elizabeth Lee
Nancy Long	Naomi Pena
Betsy Platt	Dwain Winters
Neil Zimmerman	

Office Manager

Donna Barker

Newsletter

Editor	Deborah Lange
Art Director	Nancy Abeles
Peter Dean	Sarah Fulton
Owen Kelley	Elizabeth Lee
Betsy Platt	Peter Somerville
Julia Wilson	

Benefit Performance for the New Playground

The Playground Committee is holding a benefit performance to raise money for the new playground at the park.

What's a Wolf to Do? will be presented by the Picture Book Players of Adventure Theatre on Friday, May 14, at 7 pm at the theater. The play is

a delightful musical retelling of Red Riding Hood with visits from the three little pigs, Goldilocks, and the three bears. It is suitable for children 3 and up. The carousel will be open for this event from 6 to 9 pm and a dessert reception will follow the performance.

To order tickets, send in the form below. Your reservation is complete only after we confirm by phone or e-mail. Please pick up your ticket at the box office on the evening of the performance. Call **301-229-9049** for information.

What's a Wolf To Do?

Child 12 and under _____ tickets at \$10 each _____
Adult _____ tickets at \$20 each _____
Donor _____ tickets at \$50 each _____

Patron _____ tickets at \$75 each _____
Benefactor _____ tickets at \$100 each _____
Total _____

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____ Date _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____ E-mail address _____

Please charge my contribution to my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Card Number _____ Expiration _____

Signature _____

or make check payable to the **Glen Echo Park Foundation – Playground**. Payment must accompany reservation.

Please mail to: Playground Benefit, Glen Echo Park Foundation, 7300 MacArthur Boulevard, Glen Echo, Maryland 20812

What is Contra Dancing?



Contra dancers enjoy a Friday night dance

The energetic twirling and swaying that occurs on Friday and Sunday nights in the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo is currently known as *contra dancing*. Contra dancing is a very old form of traditional dance done by unschooled dancers of all ages and abilities, coming together to share community spirit and joy. The music has roots even older than the dance form and is usually Celtic or Appalachian. The tunes are often jigs and reels.

Contra dancing has evolved from the French and English Country Dancing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, according to dance historian Bob Dalsemer. Contra dancing uses figures common to those two genres and to Irish Country Set Dancing and American Square Dancing. The Irish sets developed from the dances of Brittany. The term *contra dance* is derived from a French corruption of the Eng-



lish term *country dance*. Originally tunes and dances were paired together, but in time these matches were lost and new dances were written to old dance tunes. Both the music and the dance figures have gradually adapted

to the culture and values of the locale in which they are performed. A dance form similar to contra dance is found in Martinique, home to descendants of Irish immigrants, where a Caribbean style of movement has been added. In the United States

some musicians in-

corporate jazz elements into traditional tunes.

Today, contra dancers begin the dance in two long lines of facing partners. Each couple steps through a set of dance figures with another couple before progressing either up the line or down the line to dance with a new couple. The eight to ten figures in a dance are then repeated with the new couple. Ultimately participants dance with everyone in the line.

New dance figures have been developed by choreographers, but some of the oldest dances are still popular. When a new dance is introduced, dancers practice the steps in a walk-through, instructed by a caller who will continue to cue the dance once the music starts. Dancers today add their own flourishes and especially enjoy the opportunity for flirting that the dance provides. Children often pick up the steps more readily than adults. When newcomers discover how easy it is to learn the figures and how much help is available from others, they often dance an entire evening. Lately more and more teen-agers and young adults have been filling the ranks along with the babyboomers and grandparents.

Contra dancing came to Glen Echo in 1977 when the historic Spanish Ballroom was reopened by the National Park Service and a Saturday night dance included several types of

folk dancing. The Friday night dances began in 1983 when a group of dancers led by callers Lou Shapiro and Bruce Strand moved their dance to the Spanish Ballroom. As the Friday night dance grew in popularity, it was reorganized to be run by the Dance Committee, which became a park co-operator in 1985. Also that year the Folklore Society of Greater Washington moved its Sunday night contra dance to the Ballroom. By the mid-eighties the Spanish Ballroom had become a dance mecca for the entire Eastern Seaboard.

Average attendance was 250 to 300.

Dancers traveled to experience the highly regarded music and calling. Bands found that two performances a week at Glen



Echo helped finance an entire East Coast performance tour. Many dancers were inspired to become callers or learn to play the dance music. In 1992 the Dance Committee changed its name to the Friday Night Dancers.

Today, the hundreds of Washington area dancers whose lives revolve around their experiences at Glen Echo carry on a cultural and community tradition that is unique in our fast paced, ever-changing, technical, often impersonal world. We invite you to join us.

Sarah Fulton

Photos by Sally Hoffman

Upcoming Events

What's a Wolf To Do?	May 14
Contra Dance Benefit	May 14
Art in Action	May 23
Annual Foundation Meeting	May 23
Irish Feis	May 29
Irish Festival	May 30
Washington Folk Festival	Jun 5, 6

Saving the Bumper Car Pavilion

In 1923, the second bumper car ride ever built was installed in the famous Glen Echo Amusement Park. The bumper cars jostled riders until 1968 when the amusements were closed. Eventually the National Park Service acquired the park, but upkeep became costly, the buildings deteriorated, and the pavilion was closed. Today, however, the pavilion is finding new life. Through the ingenuity and foresight of Park Ranger Stan Fowler and his band of hard working volunteers, the Bumper Car Pavilion is evolving into a venue for performances, dances, picnics, exhibits, classes, and craft shows.

On a cold Saturday in February, I watched as three men struggled and strained to place a newly built column into position to replace one destroyed by rot and termites. One member of the three-man team slowly raised the roof an inch or two by elongating the scaffolding. The other two steadied the heavy column and gradually wedged it into place. Sixteen columns were removed and rebuilt while scaffolding donated by Miller and Long Construction Co. held up the roof.

Before the new column was placed, armies of volunteers excavated under the floor to make room for new footers and foundations and to provide space for future electrical and ventilation systems. Prior to that came roof stabilization and leveling and removal of rotted columns, joists, and floor boards. The volunteer workers have carefully investigated the original structure and labeled and saved the removed portions for future archeological and historic research as advised by the National Park Service archeologists.

The building is a one-story, shingled structure with a convex roof and



Montgomery County volunteers remove some of the 7,000 screws that held down the steel floor

broad gabled ends, typical of early amusement park structures. The bumper car ride, called the Skooter, featured 25 two-passenger cars operated by electricity over a steel floor.

A little-known fact about this project is that in spite of reconstruction estimates ranging from \$300,000 to \$450,000 in 1987 and recommendations to tear down the Pavilion because it was a hazard, the current work on the building has been accomplished with fewer than 2000 hours of volunteer time by about 300 individuals and with less than \$10,000 in costs.

Love of this park and the invaluable enrichment it provides motivated young mothers, Boy Scouts, AmeriCorps members, social dancers, and many others to spend tedious hours removing the packed clay soil from under the building and prying off the old metal floor. A man convicted of a misdemeanor spent his community service hours painting new parts. Besides Ranger Fowler, two board members of the Glen Echo Park Foundation, Peter Somerville and Neil Zimmerman, have labored endlessly this winter to get the new columns ready to insert under the roof. Steve Satterfield and Lee Hampton cut hundreds of small pieces of wood for replacement railings. Peter Galloway and Joy Borg hold the award for working the most

hours as excavators.

There is much left to accomplish: Install the rest of the columns, outriggers and railings. Inspect and repair the subfloor and level the floor. Provide electrical and ventilation systems. Restore the eaves, including the delicate lattice work, and repair the roof. The eaves and roof will be sponsored by the National Park Service and contracted out so that the pavilion will be ready for use as transitional space during the park renovations.

Park supporters wishing to volunteer are encouraged to come out this May to assemble and install the columns and railings. Fowler, Somerville, Satterfield, and Zimmerman are putting the southwest corner together to serve as a model for the rest of the building and to determine the most efficient way to proceed. People are needed to work weekly so that a steady crew of knowledgeable laborers can continue the work without frequent instruction. Contributions of food and beverages on Saturdays would add to the community spirit. In this age of "government won't do it all," the Bumper Car Pavilion has become a monument to the industry, motivation, and persistence of volunteers.

Sarah Fulton

Give Now So That Glen Echo Park Lives!

Show your support for the park and its cultural arts programs by making a special gift now to the Glen Echo Foundation. Dollars and gifts of stock show as much support as petitions. Any amount helps. Let the NPS know that YOU want Glen Echo Park to continue to enrich the lives of your family and the extended community.

Rick Sherbert, Glassblowing Artist

A few steps away from the hubbub of Glen Echo Park, down past the spooky remnants of the Crystal Pool, an ancient stone cottage appears like something out of a fairy tale. Instead of the gruff old woodsman I half-expect, Rick Sherbert, a genial, fortyish fellow, opens the door. And instead of the cozy hodgepodge suggested by the bucolic setting, the interior of the cottage is immaculately neat, clean, and sparsely furnished. The air inside is crisply hot - arid as a desert - and the far end of the room is dominated by an enormous furnace. Rhythm and blues music wafts over the roar of the furnace and the walls are lined with shelves that display colorful glass bowls and vases. Students huddle in the center of the room, conferring over an amorphous lump of hot glass.



Sherbert was a senior analyst in a major Washington area computer company when he took up stained glass as a hobby in 1984. Almost immediately, his work was recognized. He started accepting commissions and gradually found he was becoming busier in the

evenings than at his day job. He then discovered fused glass, and while pursuing a related interest in dichroic glass, met a craftsman who got him interested in glassblowing. After taking an intensive, month-long glassblowing class at the Penland School in North Carolina, Sherbert found he had fallen hard for his new craft. Fired with enthusiasm, he signed up for a two-month session later that year. He agonized briefly about the effect this long absence would have on his computer career, then took a decisive leap of faith and quit his job to blow glass full-time. Excitement radiates from him as he describes his discovery of "living, flowing" glass, so different from working in stained glass, "rigid, compartmentalized bits that were already dead." He found two glassblowers in the DC area and offered to do anything around their studio in exchange for the opportunity to learn. Rick Sherbert had found his calling.



Rick Sherbert starts a bowl by blowing a glass bubble

During his second session at Penland he discovered contra dancing, and his search for a local contra dance in the Washington area led him to the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, where he noticed the nearby artists' studios. He submitted a proposal to the Park Service, got accepted, and created a studio in the caretaker's old stone cottage.

Sherbert's classes have been wildly popular, with long waiting lists forming soon after the schedules are published. Part of the reason for the success of his program, aside from Sherbert's excellent teaching manner, is that the Glen Echo studio is the only publicly accessible studio between Philadelphia and Atlanta. Very few glassblowers open their studios to students. Sherbert envisions expanding the glass program to accommodate more than the current six students at a time and offering master classes by world-class artists in the medium. Achieving that

(Continued on page 6)

Yes!

I want to be a member of the Glen Echo Park Foundation and be part of the continuing effort to restore and enhance the park as a center for cultural, educational, and recreational pursuits.

Please enroll me in the following category:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Basic Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Golden Dancer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporting | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Brass Ring Club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 1891 Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Silver Stander | |

I want to make an additional donation of \$ _____ to the following fund:

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Carousel Restoration | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish Ballroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Bumper Car Pavilion | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Pottery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please send details on stock or property donations <input type="checkbox"/> My employer will match my contribution. I am enclosing the appropriate forms | | | | | |

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____ Date _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____ E-mail address _____

Please charge my contribution to my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Card Number _____ Expiration _____

Signature _____

I would like to volunteer: ☐ at park events ☐ in the office ☐ with the restoration projects ☐ with fundraising

My skills or interests are _____

The Glen Echo Park Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, and membership and donations are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to the Glen Echo Park Foundation.

Please mail to: Glen Echo Park Foundation, Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Boulevard, Glen Echo, Maryland 20812

Rick Sherbert (Continued from page 5)
dream would require a larger space. Plans have been discussed for a new three-dimensional arts facility somewhere in Glen Echo Park that could house the glass, sculpture, and metal-working programs, but all plans are on hold until the future management of the park is determined.

In the meantime, Sherbert keeps busy balancing the joys and demands of teaching with practicing his craft.

Although he could fill more classes than he currently has, he needs time to hone his skills, produce his work, and keep up with a rigorous schedule of shows. When asked about the formal symmetry of his work in a medium that so lends itself to natural forms, he responds, "I'm an engineer, a tool junkie - not an artist. It's really easy to make the floppy organic stuff. The challenge of creating a perfect shape is what intrigues me." Yet his

work, so eloquent in its vivid color and purity of line, seems poised at the juncture of art and craft.

Whether glassblowing is an art or a craft, it is indisputably fascinating to watch. Next time you're at the park, drop by and experience for yourself the magic that goes on behind the green door of the caretaker's cottage.

Betsy Platt

Making Contributions of Stock

Here's how you can help the Foundation and save money at the same time. Everyone knows the stock market has grown in leaps and bounds over the past ten years. One form of contribution that has positive tax consequences for the contributor is to make a gift to the Foundation of stocks that have significantly increased in value since their date of purchase. When you sell stocks that have increased in value, you pay capital gains taxes (up to 30%) on the incremental value, but when you contribute stocks to a charitable cause, you can claim the full value of the gift as a charitable contribution.

This is the way it works: If you purchased 10 shares of Lucent Technologies a year ago at \$50 a share, these shares are now worth roughly \$100 a piece, a 100% profit. If you

sold all your shares tomorrow, you would pay between 25 to 30% of the gains in federal and state taxes. If instead you gave even one of those shares to the Foundation, you could claim the total \$100 contribution as an offset against other income, *and pay less tax*. So again, the comparison is, lose 25 to 30% of the increase in your investment to taxes or make a heartfelt pledge to Glen Echo Park and pay less tax than you would have otherwise.

Certain limitations may apply to larger contributions. Consult your tax advisor to be sure you can fully deduct your gift in the year it was made.

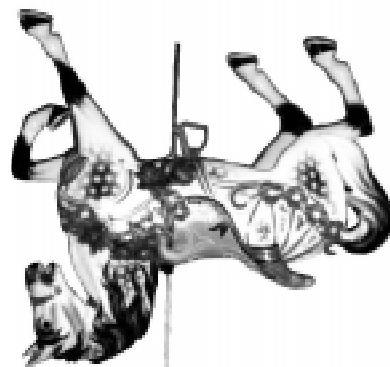
For information about stock transfers to the Glen Echo Park Foundation, please call the Foundation treasurer, Carole Fredrick, at 301-320-2330.

Contra Dance Fundraiser

A special Friday Night Dance on May 14 will raise funds for the Glen Echo Park Foundation while celebrating twenty three years of music and dance at the Spanish Ballroom. It will feature tunes and choreography composed in honor of the ballroom and the park.

The Glen Echo Open Band will play and Greg Frock and Ann Fallon will call the dances. The event will run from 8:30 to midnight, with a free beginners' lesson at 7:30. Admission for this spectacular evening is \$10.00.

The Friday Night Dancers committee encourages creative, lively, and original outfits for dancing.



Glen Echo Park Foundation
Glen Echo Park
7300 MacArthur Blvd
Glen Echo, MD 20812

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
ROCKVILLE MD
PERMIT #4297